



LARRY HOGAN
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MARYLAND OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

January 18, 2022

Senate Joint Resolution 3 & House Joint Resolution 1 Maryland Citizens' Legislative Districting Plan of 2022

Position: Strongly Support

Dear Members of the Senate Reapportionment and Redistricting Committee and the House Rules and Executive Nominations Committee:

Free and fair elections are the very foundation of American democracy and the most basic promise that those in power can pledge to citizens. Here in Maryland, nonpartisan redistricting reform has been overdue for decades and has saddled our state with the unfortunate distinction of being home to the most gerrymandered districts in the nation.

Since taking office, my administration has been actively working to eliminate gerrymandering and restore fairness in our electoral system. During my first year as governor, we established the nonpartisan Maryland Redistricting Reform Commission, whose members traveled the state to hear what Marylanders wanted. The Commission recommended that the state establish an independent commission to draw congressional and legislative districts, eliminating the influence of elected officials and political parties. As a result of those recommendations, I introduced redistricting reform legislation in an effort to remove partisan politics from the redistricting process, which the General Assembly ultimately failed to pass.

Despite the failure to act by the Maryland General Assembly, in January 2021, I took historic action and formed the first ever Maryland Citizens Redistricting Commission, which consisted of an equal mix of Democrats, Republicans, and Unaffiliated members. This Commission allowed citizens, instead of politicians, to draw congressional and legislative district lines in a fair and impartial manner. The Commission created new district boundaries, reflected in Senate Joint Resolution 3 and House Joint Resolution 1, that are free from political influence and offer the opportunity for fair elections in Maryland.

The Commission held 36 public meetings, with more than 4,000 attendees, including citizens as well as organizational leaders and elected officials. The Commission also provided an online mapping tool for the public to prepare and submit maps, which resulted in a total of 86 map proposals from the public. The Commission was tasked with creating maps that complied with the U.S. Constitution and

Voting Rights Act of 1965, respected natural boundaries and geographic integrity, and did not take into account citizens' party affiliation.

Unfortunately, the General Assembly created the Legislative Redistricting Advisory Commission, which consisted of elected officials and government bureaucrats who failed to operate in a transparent manner and created their own secretly-drawn legislative maps, resulting in Senate Joint Resolution 2 and House Joint Resolution 2. These maps, if passed, will join the legislative maps of recent election cycles that have resulted in numerous lawsuits. Legislative maps were invalidated in 1994 for failing to create a majority-minority district as required by the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Again, maps were overturned in 2002 for repeated crossings of lines between Baltimore City and Baltimore County that improperly prioritized political goals over constitutional congruence standards.

The Maryland Citizens Redistricting Commission's legislative plan, outlined in Senate Joint Resolution 3 and House Joint Resolution 1, used criteria to create fair district lines. The Citizens Commission used a stricter population equality than required by federal law for legislative districts, which has permitted a deviation of 5% in drawing the districts. In the Citizens Commission's plan, each Senate district is within less than 2% of equal population and each House district is within less than 3%. In addition, the Citizens Commission's plan created 87 single member districts, compared to the current 24 single member districts.

We must rebuild a democracy where voters pick their elected representatives - not the other way around. For these reasons, I sincerely ask you to pass Senate Joint Resolution 3 and House Joint Resolution 1, which will create free and fair elections that have been long overdue in Maryland and that voters deserve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Larry Hogan", with a stylized, flowing script.

Larry Hogan
Governor